

Orkney Songbook

Volume IV *From Orkney Folksingers*



Five traditional Orkney Folksongs
arranged for SATB by

Clive Strutt

Cover Illustration:

A drawing illustrating song No. 4 *The Selkie of Suke Skerry* of this volume by Vernon Hill in *Ballads Weird and Wonderful*, Jane Lane, London and New York, 1911.

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Composer's Notes

There seems to be a dearth of material available for inclusion in this section – only five songs were found:

No. 1 ***Hoy's Dark and Lofty Isle*** came to me from Howie Firth, at present the organiser of the Orkney International Science Festival, but at the time leading presenter of BBC Radio Orkney. A tape of a traditional folksinger – Meg Louttit – was loaned to me by Howie, and I had the song transcribed on paper by Colin Rendall, a staff member of the Orkney Library who was engaged in a project on such work.

No. 2 ***In my Skiff Bounding Lightly*** has no traceable history, and does not seem to have been included in *Folksongs of Britain and Ireland*, edited by Peter Kennedy. The song itself refers to both specific Orkney locations (the island of Hoy and Helli Geo¹ (spelt 'Helligjeo' in the song) on the south coast of Shapinsay, and the tale of the selkie (a seal that has the power to transform itself into human form), a seal-man being the subject of song No. 4 in this volume.

¹A long narrow creek with a cave at the end.

No. 3 ***The Poor Auld Maid*** does appear in the Kennedy collection, recorded by him in 1955 from Johina Leith of Stenness, Orkney. More detail can be found in the cited work at page 483.

No. 4 ***The Selkie of Sule Skerry*** (PHOCA² MUSIC III) is a deservedly popular folksong, and the subject of many popular arrangements.

No. 5 ***The Standing Stones*** is presented here in two versions:

- (A) for SATB, and in B flat minor;
- (B) for SAT and in G minor.

The tune is a Bothy Ballad *The Ploughboy's Dream*, and the words are *The Lovers – A West Mainland Legend* from *Songs of the Norse* (J. Mooney, 1883). It was recorded by Kennedy in 1955 from John and Ethel Findlater of Dounby.

Clive Strutt, 16 September, 2016

² 'PHOCA MUSIC III' because there are two other songs in the whole collection bearing this subtitle. A play on words between 'PHOCA' (a seal) and 'folk'.

Orkney Songbook VOLUME IV: “From Orkney Folksingers”

FIVE TRADITIONAL ORKNEY FOLKSONGS

Arranged for SATB Choir

By Clive Strutt

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-1-
"HOY'S DARK AND LOFTY ISLE"

Choral harmonization arranged by Clive Strutt from melody transcribed by Colin Rendall from tape-cassette of singing by Meg Loultit of Holm.

(Duration: 3'45")

Andante mesto e con tenerezza
(m.m. d. = ca. 60)

S
A

v.1 At eve, while glows the sett-ing sun acr-oss the west-ern wave, a gall-ant
v.2 Fresh from the po-lar ic--y seas, dom-in-ion of the whales, She band-ed
v.3 But lo! as she was sail-ing on, her is--land son was laid; His last, his
v.4 Land!-Land! they wished for: land was nigh-Hoy's dark and loft-y isle. A smile lit
v.5 Long,--long he gazed, while down his cheek the big tears slow-ly rolled; In vain it
v.6 At length, through sobs suppr-essed and low, soft mur-muring words were heard, which spoke of
v.7 Ma---ry, 'mid young life's ten-der care, she breathed her bos-om spell, And must I
v.8 And then a ha---zy dim-ness stole in--to the sail-or's eyes, And then his

T
B

S
A

(v.1) barque her course sailed on, how beau-ti--ful and brave; Robed in the garb of
(v.2) on be--fore the breeze that sighed al--ong her sails; 'Mid band-less oc--ean's
(v.3) dy---ing hour had come, while round their com-rade's bed stood Bri-tain's sons who
(v.4) up the sail-or's eye, a heart-felt, heaven-born smile. On deck the dy--ing
(v.5) was for man to speak the feel--ings of his soul. But from his lips no
(v.6) home and lov--ing friends sweet words of hope en-deared. Then from his in-most
(v.7) die thus all al--one; oh Ma-ry, fare thee well. "Tell her," he cried, and
(v.8) ten--der lov---ing soul went to its home on high. Where death knows no fare-

T
B

S
A

(v.1) sun-ly smiles She steered up-on the north-ern isles, She steered up-on the north-ern isles.
(v.2) gen-tle play She winged al-ong her wat-ery way, She winged al--ong her wat-ery way.
(v.3) smiled at fear, And scorned to blush, yet shed a tear, And scorned to blush, yet shed a tear.
(v.4) man they bore, To gaze up-on his nat-ive shore, To gaze up--on his nat-ive shore.
(v.5) sound there broke Though oft they moved as if he spoke, Though oft they moved as if he spoke.
(v.6) soul there came Ma-ry, that sweet-est, love-liest name, Ma-ry, that sweet-est, love-liest name.
(v.7) fond-ly sighed, "Tell her I loved her till I died, Tell her I loved her till I died.
(v.8) -well or care: May Hen-ry meet his Ma-ry there! May Hen-ry meet his Ma-ry there!

T
B

No. 2. "IN MY SKIFF BOUNDING LIGHTLY"

Allegro vivace

(M.M. ♩ = 144)

Choral Harmonisation arranged by Clive Strutt.

S
A

v.1 In my skiff bound-ing light-ly on Pent-land's dark wave, On
 v.2 When forth from the oc--ean the new wakened day Springs
 v.3 When Earth for a while bids fare--well to his light, And
 v.4 But what joy in the thought, when ag--ain he app--ears, From

T
B

v.1 Hoy's cloud-y summ-it, in Hell--i--go's cave, In sun-shine and
 (v.2) fresh, bless-ing earth, sea, and sky with his ray; Like child laugh-ter
 (v.3) mourns for his glor--ies, now shroud-ed in night; Her tear is the
 (v.4) his bed of gold waves, and earth smiles thro' her tears; That but thrice he shall

v.3: ♩ ♩ v.4: ♩ ♩

v.1 temp-est, on mount-ain or sea, Wher--e'er my foot wand-ers, my
 (v.2) ripp-ling o'er oc--ean and isle, My soul too re--joic-es - I
 (v.3) dew-drop, her sigh the light-wind, And re-call thy fond-tear and soft
 (v.4) leap ov-er yon gold-en line, Ere I say, "Thor-a, dar-ling, now!

v.3: ♩ ♩ v.4: ♩ ♩

v.1 heart turns to thee. D.C. for v.v. 2-4
 (v.2) think of thy smile.
 (v.3) sigh to my mind.
 (v.4) now thou art mine."

21-4-09

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No 3 "THE POOR AULD MAID"

Vivace (m.m. ♩=138)

(Duration: 1' 24")

Trad. arranged by Clive Strutt

S
A

v.1 In a lone- - - ly gar-et an auld maid sat w' her
v.2 The wint- - - ty winds they rav- - age and roar, The
v.3 No gen- - - tie tap ever comes tae my door, Nor a
v.4 The time pass-es by with the clock's dull tick, And the
v.5 My cheeks are grow-ing grizzl-ed and my hair's turn-ing grey And the
v.6 Come - all you that cling - to your true - lov-ers' arms Take -

T
B

(v.1) cand- - - le burn-ing dim while stretched at her feet lay an
(v.2) trees they crack and mourn, While this poor maid stretched
(v.3) kind- - - ly hand to car- - ess, Nor ev- - - er a foot-step
(v.4) wear-i-some purr of the cat; It seems that I've lived since the
(v.5) sight of my eyes near-ly spent, And my chance of gett-ing wed it's as
(v.6) warn- - - ing by what I have said; For the lon-ie-som-est life in

(v.1) auld tam cat As grey as Me-thu-sa- - - lem. D.C. 2-6
(v.2) oot on the floor And sang in a dol-or-ous tone.
(v.3) cross - - - es me floor Tae light-en me lone- - li- - - ness
(v.4) ark came down On the top of Mount Ar - a - - rat.
(v.5) far far aw- - au As the stars in the firm-a- - - ment.
(v.6) a' this world Is the life of a poof auld maid.

26-4-09

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Moderato di molto (u.m. J. = 60):

To be sung with a sense of impending tragedy.

Traditional folk-song: choral harmonisation arranged by Clive Strutt.
(Duration: 2'37")

S A

v.1 An eart-ley nour - ris sits and sings, And aye she sings, Ba,

v.4 "It wis na weel," quo the maid - en fair, "It wis ne weel in -

T B

(v.1) li - ly wean! Litt - le ken I me bair - nis fai - ther, Far less the

(v.4) deed, quo she, "That the great Sel - kie o' Sule Skerr - ie Suld hae come and

(v.1) land that he staps een.^{3.4} v.2 Then ane ar - ose at her bed - fit, An'a

(v.4) aught a bairn tae me. v.5 Noo he has taen a purse of goud, And

T B {v.2 Then ane ar - ose, an'a grum - ley

{v.5 Noo he has taen a - purse of

S A {v.2 grum - ley guest I'm sure wis he:

{v.5 he has pit hid up - o her knee,

T B {v.2 guest I'm sure wis he:

{v.5 goud an' has pit hid up - o her knee,

S
(v.2) Here am I — thy bairn — is fai-ther, Al-though that I be
(v.5) "Gie tae me — my litt- - le son, — An' tak — thee up — thy

A
(v.2) thy bairn...is fai-ther, Al-though that I be
(v.5) "Gie tae me my son, — An' tak — thee up — thy

T
(v.2) Say-in', Here am I thy bair-nis — fai-ther, Al-though that I be
(v.5) "Gie tae me my litt-le young son, — An' tak thee up thy

B
(v.2) Here am I — thy bair-nis — faith-er, Al-though that I be
(v.5) "Gie tae me — my litt-le young son — An' tak thee up thy

(v.2) not come-lie. v.3 "I am a man up-on the lan' An' I am a
(v.5) nourr - is - fee. v.6 "An' it sall come one sim-mer's day, When shines the sun

(v.2) not come-lie. v.3 "I am a man up-on the lan'; An' I am a
(v.5) nourr - is - fee. v.6 "An' it sall come one sim-mer's day, When shines the sun

(v.2) not come-lie. v.3 "I am a man up-on the lan'; An' I am a
(v.5) nourr - is - fee. v.6 "An' it sall come one sim-mer's day, When shines the sun

(v.2) not come-lie. v.3 "I am a man up-on the lan'; An' I am a
(v.5) nourr - is - fee. v.6 "An' it sall come one sim-mer's day, When shines the sun

(v.3) sel-kie in the sea; And when I'm far and far frae lan', My
(v.6) het on ev- - era stane, That I will tak my litt-le son, — An'

(v.3) sel- - kie in the sea; And when I'm far and far frae lan', My
(v.6) het on ev- era stane, That I will tak my litt-le son, An'

(v.3) sel-kie in the sea; And when I'm far and far frae lan', My
(v.6) het on ev- era stane, That I will tak my litt - le son, An'

(v.3) sel- - kie in the sea; My
(v.6) het on ev- era stane, An'

S
A

(v. 3) dwell---ing is in Sule Sker-rie." v.7{S}{A}

(v. 6) teach him for tae swim the faem." v.7{B} "An' thu sall marr-y a

T
B

(solo) *mf* *T. (solo)* *B. (Tutti)*

S
A

sotto voce quasi lontano (S, A)

(v. 7){S}{A} And aye she sings Ba li-ly

(v. 7){B} proud gunn-er, An' a proud gunn-er I'm sure he'll be, An' the

T
B

S
A

(S): *MOLTO Rit. ---* ly, Ba

(v. 7){A} wean! And aye she sings Ba li---ly wean, Ba

(v. 7){B} ve--ry first shot that ere he shoots, He'll shoot baith my young

T
B

MOLTO Rit. ---

S
A

dim. --- ppp

(v. 7){A} li-ly wean.

(v. 7){B} son and me.

dim. --- ppp

No 5 A

"THE STANDING STONES"

Vivace (M.M. ♩ = 138)

(Duration: 3' 30")

Music arranged by Clive Strutt.

S
A

v.1 In one of these lone Ork-ney Isles There dwelled a maid-en
v.4 The land runs out in-to the sea It's a narr-ow neck of
v.7 They walked to-wards the Lov-ers' Stone And through it passed their
v.10 When a form up-on him sprang With dag-ger gleam-ing
v.13 His hand was point-ing to the stars, And his eyes gazed at the

T
B

S
A

(v.1) fair; Her cheeks were red and her eyes were blue, She had
(v.4) land Where weird and grim the Stand-ing Stones In a
(v.7) hands; They plight-ed there a con-stant troth Sealed
(v.10) bright It pierced his heart, and his dy-ing screams Dist--
(v.13) light, And with a smil-ing count-en-ance He

T
B

S
A

(v.1) yell-ow cur-ling hair (v.2) Which caught the eye and then the heart of
(v.4) cir-cle there they stand (v.5) One bann-y moon-light Christ-mas Eve They
(v.7) by love's stead-fast bands (v.8) He kissed his maid, then he watched her That
(v.10) -urbed the sil-ent night (v.11) The murder-er was the one who wished That
(v.13) van-ished from her sight (v.14) She quick-ly turned, and home she ran; No

T
B

S
A

(v.2) one who could nev-er be a lov-er of so true a maid Or fair a form as
(v.9) met at that sad place, With heart in glee and beams o' love Were shin-ing in her
(v.8) lone-ly bridge go o'er, For litt-le, litt-le did he think To see his dar-ling
(v.11) maid-en's heart to gain, Un-not-iced he had seen them part And he swore to give her
(v.14) word of this was said, For well she knew at see-ing his form That her faith-ful love was

T
B

No 5 B

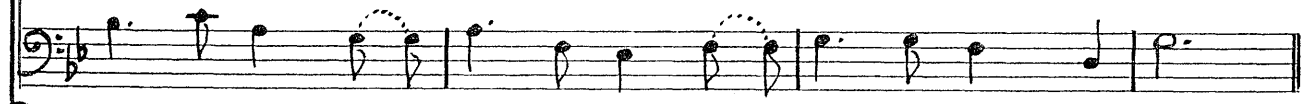
ORKNEY BALLAD: "The Standing Stones"

Recorded by P. Kennedy, 1955, from John and Ethel
Findlater, Dornby, Orkney.TUNE: Bothy Ballad "The Ploughboy's Dream" harmonised for
SAT choir by Clive Strutt; WORDS: "The Lovers - A West
Highland Legend" (from "Songs of the Norse" - J. Mooney, 1883)Animato
(m.m. ♩ = 132)S
A

- v.1 In one of these lone Ork-ney Isles There dwelled a maid-en fair, Her
v.4 The land runs out in ... to the sea, A nar--- row neck of land Where
v.7 They walked to-wards the Lov-ers' Stone And through it passed their hands: They
v.10 When a form up-on him sprang With dag--get gleam-----ing bright; It
v.13 His hand was point-ing to the stars, His eyes gazed at the light, And

Ten.
Bar.

- (v.1) cheeks were red and her eyes were blue, She had yel--- low cur-----ling hair.
(v.4) weird and grim the Stand-ing Stones In a cir---cle there they stand.
(v.7) plight-ed there a con---stant truth Sealed by love's stead---fast bands.
(v.10) pierced his heart and his dy-----ing screams Dis-----turbed the si-----lent night.
(v.13) with a smil---ing count-en-ance He van-ished from her sight.



- v.2 Which caught the eye and then the heart Of one who could ne-ver be; A
v.5 One bon---ny moon-light Christ-mas Eve They met at that sad place; With
v.8 He kissed his maid and then watched her That lone-ly bridge go o'er; For
v.11 The murd-erer was the one who wished That maid-en's heart to gain; Un---
v.14 She quick--ly turned and home she ran; No word of this was said; For



- (v.2) lov---er of so true a maid Or fair a form as she.
(v.5) heart in glee the beams of love Were shin-----ing on her face.
(v.8) lit---tle, lit---tle did he think He'd not see his dar-----ling more
(v.11) --not---iced he had seen them part And he swore he'd give her pain.
(v.14) well she knew at seeing his form That her faith---fu) love was dead.



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v. 6 ♯ ♯

v.3 Acr--oss that lake in Sand-wick Dwelled a youth she held most
 v.6 When her lov--er came and grasped her hand--What lov---ing words they
 v.9 He turned his face to----ward his home That home he nev-er did
 v.12 This maid had near-ly reached her home When star---tled by a
 v.15 And from that day She pined aw---ay, No smile up---on her

(v.3) true; And ev-----er since her in-----tan--cy He had watched those eyes so
 (v.6) said: They talked of fut---ure's hap---py days As through the Stones they
 (v.9) see; And you shall have the sto-----ry As it was told to
 (v.12) cry; She turned to look a---round her And her love was stand-ing
 (v.15) face; With op-----en arms she went to meet him In a bright-er

(v.3) blue. D.C. for vv. 4-6.
 (v.6) strayed. D.C. for vv. 7-9
 (v.9) me. D.C. for vv. 10-12
 (v.12) by. D.C. for vv. 13-15
 (v.15) place. FINE

